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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1615
INFO RULSDMK/DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUCPDOC/USDOC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHMFIUU/TSA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHMFIUU/FAA NATIONAL HQ WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS IMMEDIATE
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE 3593

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STATE FOR EAP/MTS AND EB/TRA
FAA FOR TOKYO
SINGAPORE AND TOKYO FOR FAA
COMMERCE FOR BERLINGUETTE

SENSITIVE, SIPDIS

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TAGS: EAIR ECON EINV ETRD RP
SUBJECT: Ninoy Aquino International Airport - Terminal 3

REF: 07 Manila 929

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Manila's Ninoy Aquino International Airport
Terminal 3 (NAIA T3) began handling flights on July 22, 2008, six
years of legal battles after its construction was completed. Some
aspects of the new terminal are still not functioning properly,
causing problems that have delayed and stranded passengers of the
three domestic airlines that have begun using it. Of greater
concern, some security procedures for screening baggage and tarmac
access are not in place, which may create security vulnerabilities
and obstacles for U.S. airlines hoping to use the new terminal. End
summary.

¶2. (SBU) Manila's much needed new international terminal "T3" was
completed in 2002 but was unable to open due to still unresolved
legal battles over the ownership and financing. Earlier this year,
Philippine President Arroyo directly intervened in the case to
ensure that some use could be made of the new structure.
Philippines Airlines (PAL) affiliates, PAL Express and Air
Philippines, and Cebu Pacific Air moved their domestic operations to
T3 in late July. On August 1, Cebu Pacific Air also moved its
Manila-based regional operations to T3.

¶3. (SBU) The first few weeks of operation at T3 have revealed a
number of glitches that need to be resolved. These problems are due
in part to the fact that the building has sat unused and un-powered
for over six years, and caused in part by the absence of an official
turnover by the contractor and the subsequent lack of certain key
software and operations manuals. For example, none of the flight
display monitors has been working; communications links between the
ticket counters and the gates do not work; only two of the 28
sky-bridges are operational; and the automated baggage handling
system is essentially non-operational.

¶4. (SBU) The airlines using the terminal have been doing their best
to work around the glitches, and are making progress in reducing the
delays and confusion. However, Embassy Transportation Security
Agency (TSA) agents and U.S. airline executives have noted several
serious security deficiencies that could prevent U.S. airlines from
using T3. Some of these deficiencies could be corrected with simple
fixes such as locking doors and posting notices. However, other
deficiencies, such as the lack of operational explosive detection
systems in the baggage handling area and the lack of explosive trace
detection systems will be more difficult to correct. Most U.S.
airlines have security guidelines that go beyond what the TSA
requires.

¶5. (SBU) T3 was designed and built to international security
standards. The most serious security problems stem from the lack of
software and operations manuals for the installed security systems.
Gradually, the three airlines currently using T3 are learning how to

make it work. However, U.S. and other airlines that adhere to stricter security standards see obstacles to their using the new terminal and are now concerned that Philippine airlines may fill up all the available space in T3 leaving them stuck in the older, decrepit Terminal 1.

KENNEY